Meeting with your Elected Officials

Requesting the Meeting:
- Call the elected official's in-district office to make the request (can look up the office #
online).
- If it's a federal official, do research to find out when the elected official will be in their home
district. (Congressional recesses are usually a good time). You can also call the Rep's district
office to find out when they will be available for in-district meetings.
- Have your availability ready when you call to make the meeting request.
- Be prepared to say what the meeting is about, and have the names of all individuals who
will attend.
- Ask if there is a limit on the number of individuals permitted in the meeting.
- Usually the staff person will take down your request, or may ask you to fill out a meeting
request form online.
- Often elected officials (especially federal level) may not be available to meet in person, so it
may be a staff person who attends the meeting in their stead.
- If you do not get a response to your meeting request within a few days, call back to follow
up.

Preparing for the Meeting:
- Determine who will attend the meeting. It is often a good rule of thumb to show that
multiple organizations share the same position about the issue of concern, so having a rep
from each organization that is working with you to attend the meeting is ideal.

- Prepare your message.
- Develop a set of talking points for your meeting. Determine what the most important
reasons are for supporting or opposing the issue, and write these down in a set of bullets.
- Decide who will say what in the meeting, who will deliver which points.
-When possible, try to tailor your message to describe how the issue will affect you on the local level.
-Sharing a personal experience or story about how the issue has affected you or your community can is a good way to put it in context for your elected official.
-Designate one person ahead of time to take notes during the meeting. Be sure to be ready to take down what information was delivered to the Rep, what questions they ask, and what follow up steps there may be.
-Gather materials. Organize fact sheets, press clips, or other materials that provide information about your position on the issue to leave with your Congressional Rep.
-Prepare any post cards or petitions that you may have gathered for delivery during the meeting. This shows the widespread support for the position from the Rep’s constituents.

During the Meeting:
-Address the Rep by their formal title, ie “Congressman Turner”
-Introduce everyone who is in the room, their affiliation, and whether they are a constituent.
-Thank the elected official for taking the time to meet.
-Deliver your message as planned.
-Keep in mind that it’s ok not to be an expert on the subject that you are speaking about. If the Rep asks a question about the issue that you do not know the answer to, let them know that you will look into it, and get back to them with an answer, if possible.
-After you’ve finished delivering your information, ask them for their support of your position on the issue, and any other more particular asks that you may have.
-If they do not agree to support your position, ask them if they would be willing to keep an open mind to new information about the issue as it becomes available.
-Thank them again for their time as the meeting concludes.

Follow-Up:
-Debrief the meeting as a group, go over impressions from the meeting.
-Determine if there are any follow up steps, and who is taking responsibility for getting them done.
-If the elected official did not tell you their position on the issue, be sure to follow up with their office to ask them what their stance is.